

**Thomas Jefferson to Edward Telfair, March 26, 1791,
Transcription recipient states William Telfair, from the
Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal
Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

TO THE GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA¹ (WILLIAM TELFAIR)

1 From a copy courteously furnished by Colonel C. C. Jones, of Augusta, Georgia.

Philadelphia, Mar. 26, 1791.

Sir, —Your favor of the 2d of January was received the 4th instant. The dispositions expressed by the Governour of Florida give reason to hope he will execute with good faith the orders of his Sovereign to prevent the future reception within his province of slaves flying from the United States. How far he may think himself authorized to give up those who have taken refuge there heretofore is another question. I observe that the orders he announces to have received say nothing of the past. It is probable therefore that an application from us to give them retrospective effect, may require his asking new orders from his Court. The delay which will necessarily attend the answer, the doubts what that answer may be, & if what we wish, the facility of evading the execution if there be a disposition to evade it, are circumstances to be weighed beforehand, as well as the probable amount of the interest it would be possible to recover. If this last be small, it may be questionable how far the government ought in prudence to commit itself by a demand of such dilatory & doubtful effect. As the President will be at Augusta in the course of the tour in which he is now engaged, you will have an opportunity of explaining to him the extent of the losses complained of, & how far they could probably be recovered, even were

Library of Congress

the dispositions of your neighbours favourable to the recovery, & what those dispositions may actually be.